

## Staggering Silence

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## Staggering Silence

In the eight years since Hiccup was brought kicking and screaming into the world, Stoic never thought he'd live to see the day when Hiccup would stop talking. He learned how wrong he was the night Valhallarama was killed.

The heavens rumbled boisterously as the dragon raid ensued. Stoic had lost count of how many homes had caught fire, and he had just finished a successful kill of a groveler when he heard Valhallarama's bloodcurdling scream. Turning on his heel, he spotted his dear wife and ran as fast as he could. Stoic could see the dragon had her pinned against their very own home. As he neared the the bulk of the dragon that loomed over her, he saw the look of sheer panic that welled in Valhallarama's eyes. Raising his trust hammer, Stoic lunged at the creature. A crisp snapping sound filled the air as the hammer head met the winged joint of the Nightmare. The Nightmare turned and snapped at Stoic. Letting loose the most ferocious battle cry he could muster, Stoic raised his arm, hammer in hand, and swung for the creature's head. The Nightmare stumbled sideways as the hammer met it right between the eyes. Dropping the hammer Stoic grasped the Nightmare by the horns and placed his knee on the dragon's muzzle. With out a moments hesitation, Stoic reached to his left and pulled out the dagger he kept in his side sheath.. The dragon's eyes grew wide with fear, and before Stoic could react, the dragon lifted it's head causing Stoic to falter backwards. In an instant the creature turned and sprung upwards.

"Coward!" Stoic called out as the silhouette of the Nightmare faded into the night sky

Turning, Stoic rushed to Valhallarama's side. As he fell to his knee's he could see a grimace begin to etch it's way across her face. Her eyes were closed tightly, and her lips were drawn taught. Looking down, Stoic gasped as he saw deep rivulets of crimson cascading steadily downward from her left side. Reaching forward Stoic placed his hands on the wound and pressed down. A high pitched moan escaped her lips as her eyes shot open suddenly. Stoic's gaze was transfixed on the blood that continued to seep through his hands. Suddenly, Stoic felt two cold hands rest atop his own.

"Stoic...?" Valhallarama uttered softly.

Stoic looked up at his beloved wife. He felt his throat begin to burn with tears as he saw Valhallarama's eyes glisten with tears. She began to shake her head slowly, and she pulled her lips inward.

"It's too..." Valhallarama uttered, scant of breath.

"It's...too...\_late...my love..." \_

\_ "\_NO!" Stoic boomed, pressing down harder.

Valhallarama's whole body began to writhe, as she uttered a deep groan. With out knowing it she began to push Stoic's hands away as she shook her head fervently.

"Stoic...please..." Valhallarama pleaded, her voice breaking.

Stoic was used to seeing his wife walk of any injury or scrape. As his wife's plea reached his ears he began to realize that his true love was about to pass on to the next world. Valhallarama was dying.

A single sob fell from Stoic's lips as he scooped Valhallarama's hands in his. Pulling them up he kissed them softly. He closed his eyes and sat down next to his wife. His shoulder's began to shudder as Valhallarama lay her head on his shoulder.

"Hold...meh..." Valhallarama slurred.

Stoic brought his arm around his wife and clasped tightly to her shoulder. Bringing his other arm around he engulfed her in a loving embrace. He winced as he felt every rise and fall of Valhallarama's chest, for fear it would be her last.

"I luh-" Stoic stammered, his voice breaking.

Turning he sought to meet his wife's gaze. Placing his hand under her chin, he gently turned her head towards him. Stoic blinked as he saw his wife's face contort as she opened her eyes.

>"I luh...love you..." Stoic stuttered.<p>

Valhallarama's gaze fell to Stoic's chin as it began to quiver uncontrollably. She began to cry silently as she felt Stoic's hand began to tremble as he gingerly caressed her chin.

"Oh Stoic..." Valhallarama whimpered.

"I love...yuh...too..."

Leaning in, Stoic pulled Valhallarama towards him. Valhallarama gasped as she felt Stoic's lips meet hers. Closing her eyes Valhallarama felt a calm sweep over her. Stoic let the kiss linger as he realized this would be the last time he and his wife would share a kiss. He felt his chest swell with love as he felt Valhallarama stroke his beard.

As quickly as the love had filled every fiber of his being, it suddenly evaporated as he felt Valhallarama shudder suddenly. Suddenly he felt her lips relax as he heard a heavy sigh escape her lips. Opening his eyes, he felt utter shock began to rivet through his body as he saw the pupil's of her eyes slowly began to dilate. Releasing from their kiss, he pulled her back by the shoulder's.

"Val!?" Stoic yelled.

"VALL!"

Her head slumped forward as Stoic shook her gently. Stoic gasped and pulled her close. Closing his eyes tightly, he began to gently rock her body back and forth. Stoic's shoulder's began to shake as he began to writhe with grief. The tears flowed ceaselessly as his silent cry's gathered strength. Suddenly, a small trembling voice broke through the sudden onslaught of sorrow.

"Muh...Mommy...?"

Looking up Stoic blinked before his vision cleared and he saw the silhouette of Hiccup peering from behind their home. Lightning flashed, and for a second Stoic saw the utter terror that had etched it's way across Hiccup's face.

"Mommy..." Hiccup whimpered.

Stoic swallowed hard as he saw multiple tears fall down Hiccup's cheek. Holding out his hand, Stoic beckoned his son to come closer. Stoic watched as Hiccup leaned heavily against the side of the house as he inched forward towards where he held onto Valhallarama. Stoic felt his chest began to ache as he saw Hiccup's legs start to buckle. As Hiccup reached the two of them, his face was completely ashen.

"Hiccup?" Stoic rasped, holding out his hand.

Hiccup moaned as he made his way around Valhallarama's body to his father's side. Stoic reached out and shifted his position as he put one arm around his son. Hiccup leaned against his father as his gaze fell upon the still face of his mother.

Hiccup slowly reached his hand out, and placed it on his mother's cheek. Hiccup began to panic as he gazed at the cold hue that had fallen over his mother's face. Leaning forward he placed both hands on her cheeks.

"Wake up Mommy..." Hiccup pleaded, his voice barely above a

whisper.

Standing on his tip toes, his gaze locked with the dull emerald eyes that had now glossed over.

>"Mooooommmyyy..." Hiccup whimpered.<p>

Stoic jarred back slightly as Hiccup turned and buried his face in the crook of Stoic's arm. Moving slowly, Stoic settled Valhallarama against the side of the house, and then wrapped his free arm around Hiccup. Stoic swallowed hard as he felt Hiccup's tiny frame begin to shudder ferociously. Pulling back Stoic gasped as he saw Hiccup was sobbing silently with his eyes shut tightly.

"Mommy...mommy...muh...mommmmmmy..." Hiccup blubbered.

"Oh son..." Stoic uttered.

Hiccup peered through one eye at this father. Opening the second eye, Hiccup pondered out loud.

"Wuh...Why won't she..wah...wake up?"

"Hiccup..." Stoic rasped.

"Mommy has gone to sleep..."

"When will she wake up?" Hiccup interrupted.

"She won't wake Hiccup..." Stoic answered, his voice wavering.

"She won't?" Hiccup pondered.

"Not in the morning?"

"Hiccup?" Stoic asked softly.

"What do we do to the dragons that raid our village...?" Stoic asked.

"We kuh...kill..them...?" Hiccup answered hesitantly.

"What happens to the dragons...When we...kill them?" Stoic asked.

"They die..." Hiccup answered slowly.

"Do you know what it means 'to die' Hiccup?" Stoic asked, as his heart grew heavy. He knew Hiccup was on the brink of understanding the sudden loss that had just plagued their lives.

"Thuh...They...go to sleep..." Hiccup stated.

"They don't wake up, do they?" Stoic asked.

Hiccup shook his head slowly.

"Oh Hiccup..." Stoic stammered, as tears ran down his face.

"Mommy...izz...is dead..."

"...No..." Hiccup uttered.

"Mommy can't be dead...She's just..."

Hiccup gasped as he turned around and faced the lifeless face of his mother. Leaning forward he placed his head on her chest next to her heart. Stoic watched as Hiccup's shoulder's began to shake as he listened for the non existent heartbeat.

"Mommy...Muh-"

Hiccup stood, and turned quickly and buried his face in Stoic's chest. He began to wail out loud as the new understanding began to take root. Stoic gathered Hiccup in his arms, and picked him up. Standing carefully he looked around and noticed that the raid had ceased. Taking advantage of the lull in quiet of the morning, Stoic headed inside.

The next week blurred by at a rapid rate. Valhallarama's funeral seemed to go very quickly and it wasn't long before she had been sent out to see, and all the last right rituals were fulfilled. In those few short days Stoic noted how quiet Hiccup had become. Normally Stoic grew tired of Hiccup's constant charade of questions. But the silence that had overwhelmed the poor boy had become nearly unbearable for Stoic.

On more then one occasion Stoic had caught the shimmer of tears welling up in Hiccup's eyes. But every time Stoic inquired about it Hiccup would shrug, and stare at the floor.

Hiccup often awoke in a fright, only to find himself crying silently. At first it startled Hiccup, but he soon grew used to the tears. Hiccup wanted to fall into his father's arms so badly, but he feared he'd just upset him if he let on.

Two weeks passed, and the silence continued to drag on. Late one night father and son sat at the table. As it had been every night before, a basket had been dropped of at their door step with food inside. Stoic shifted uncomfortably as he finished his last bite. Looking up he saw Hiccup was just staring at his food. Stoic sighed as he saw the cadaverous hue that had etched its way across Hiccup's face. Stoic furrowed his brow as he tried to read Hiccup's expression. Then it dawned on Stoic. He realized that he hadn't seen Hiccup shed a single tear since they lay-ed Valhallarama to rest. His chest began to ache as the felt the pent up sorrow began to emanate forth from across the table.

"Hhh...Hiccup?" Stoic asked, his voice trembling.

Hiccup swallowed loudly and looked to the floor as he heard his father's voice. Stoic stood and made his way to the other side of the table. Kneeling down beside his son, he placed a hand on Hiccup's shoulder. Before his very eyes, Stoic saw Hiccup's eyes start to glisten as the tears began to well up. Hiccup hung his head as he willed himself to keep the tears at bay.

"Hiccup?" Stoic asked again.

"Son...Say \_something\_...please..."

Hiccup shrugged.

Grabbing Hiccup's other shoulder, Stoic whirled Hiccup around so that he was sitting face to face with him.

"Hiccup...Look at me..." Stoic ordered softly.

Hiccup shook his head slowly.

Stoic stood suddenly. Hiccup winced as he heard his father grunt as he walked away. Looking up Hiccup saw Stoic had began to pace back and forth. A look of worry had fallen upon his face. Stoic began to breathe heavily.

"Oh Vall..." Stoic rasped, bringing his hand to his forehead.

"I don't know what to do..."

Hiccup slid off his chair and slowly made his way over to where his father now walked back and forth frantically. Hiccup began to panic as he heard his father mumble to himself.

"I don't know how to help 'em Vall..." Stoic uttered.

"Hiccup's lost...Show me...how to bring 'em back..."

Stoic's shoulder's began to shake as he uttered his silent oaths to his wife. Hiccup had never seen his father so upset. Pulling at his hair, Hiccup began to breathe loudly. His chest began to ache as he felt the sorrow rising steadily.

"Daddy?" Hiccup whimpered.

Stoic gasped out loud and froze to the spot. Had he just heard Hiccup's small voice? Looking over he saw Hiccup was staring at him intently. Turning, he fell to his knee's in front of his son. The two just stared at each other.

"I'm...not...luh...lost..." Hiccup sputtered.

Stoic gasped as he saw Hiccup's face contort as he pulled his lips in. More tears gathered in Hiccup's eyes as his gaze fell to the floor.

"I'm...right...here..." Hiccup stammered.

"Hiccup?" Stoic asked, leaning in.

The tears ebbed downward as Hiccup looked up and met his father's gaze. Hiccup exhaled might-ally as he brought his arm up to wipe the sadness from his eyes. Stoic's hand stopped him.

"No..." Stoic stammered.

A single sob fell from Hiccup's lips as he dropped his hand to his to his side. His eyes grew wide as he felt more tears fall. Quickly he turned and stood with his back towards his father.

"Hiccup!?" Stoic boomed.

Stoic flinched as he saw Hiccup tense as his voice grew angry. Clasping his hands on Hiccup's shoulder's he whirled Hiccup around. Stoic saw that Hiccup's face was taught as he fought against the pull of sorrow. In a quick motion he pulled Hiccup close. No sooner had Stoic wrapped his arms around the tiny frame of his son, did Hiccup finally let loose the sorrow with in. Stoic jarred back as Hiccup's cries gathered strength.

Three weeks of quelling in all his sorrow burst forth as Hiccup felt his father tighten his hold. Stoic gasped as he felt Hiccup's tiny fists hold dearly to the fabric of his tunic.

"Oh Hiccup...You have no idea..." Stoic uttered, stopping mid-sentence.

Hiccup pulled away, and stared at his father. He gasped as he saw Stoic had tears streaming down into his beard. Hiccup raised an eye brow as he wondered at his father's words.

"You have no idea...How good it is...To hear your voice..." Stoic stated, sniffing.

"How long...Have you been holding all...this in!?" Stoic asked, softly.

Hiccup's chin began to quiver as his gaze fell to the floor. He felt ashamed that he hadn't gone to his father sooner.

"Oh!" Stoic gasped, pulling Hiccup into another hug.

"It's all right son... I didn't mean tuh...upset you..."

"I was...afraid..." Hiccup cried.

Stoic held tighter to Hiccup.

"Didn't wanna...upset...you Daddy..."

"OH son..." Stoic rasped.

"I'm not upset... You juss frightened me... I was worried I'd never hear your voice ever again..."

Stoic clung to Hiccup as he felt him clasp tighter to his tunic. Hiccup cried for hours until he suddenly felt very tired. Stoic gasped as he felt Hiccup go still. Parting their embrace, Stoic held Hiccup out by the shoulder's.

"Hiccup?" Stoic asked, raising an eye brow.

Hiccup sighed heavily, as he looked up to his father.

"You don't have to...hide your sadness from me." Stoic encouraged.

Hiccup sniffed, and nodded slowly.

"Ok..." Hiccup stammered.

"I'm serious son..." Stoic stated, shaking Hiccup lightly.

"I just didn't want to burdeh-" Hiccup sputtered.

Stoic placed a hand over Hiccup's mouth before he could finish his sentence.

"Hiccup...The only burden that's far outweighed your mother's death...\_\_" Stoic rasped.

"Has been your silence..."

Tears streamed down Stoic's face as he spoke to his son.

"Hearing your voice Hiccup\_\_..." Stoic stammered.

"Helps me not miss her as much..."

End  
file.